

ABSTRACT

The present invention provides a reflection-type improved optical circulator. The reflection-type optical circulator includes at least one birefringent plate for receiving at least one signal light ray from a first port; and a mirror optically coupled to the at least one

5 birefringent plate, where the mirror and the at least one birefringent plate causes the at least one signal light ray to be folded back upon itself, where the at least one signal light ray is directed to a second port. The optical circulator in accordance with the present invention is a reflection-type optical circulator, in which the paths of throughgoing light rays are folded back upon themselves. This minimizes the number of required optical elements and the

10 resultant device size by using each optical element two times for each light ray.

Furthermore, the reflection-type optical circulator in accordance with the present invention can facilitate the alignment of the optical ports to the remaining optical elements because all ports can be disposed within a tightly constrained geometrical arrangement at only one side of the device.